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Freedom, Fellowship and Character in Religion.

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Outspokenness in Religious Life.

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"*Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech.*"—2 Cor. iii.12.

Brethren, my subject is—our need of more simple, outspoken religious life. I think this is the special need of Liberal Christianity to-day. In all the larger and outward aspects of religion, as we stand facing the great needs and questions of the time, our Liberal churches hold a strong position, their thought is fearless and clear, and their word is firm, direct, and—listened to. But we must be conscious that we have no similar fulness and heartiness of utterance on the smaller, inner, more personal side of religion. This is about our weakest side to-day. The high thoughts of our faith want "reducing to lower terms"; they want bringing to bear not only on the lofty problems of science and philosophy, but on the daily needs and cares of struggling, sorrowing, tempted men and women; they want shaping not only into the great utterances of pulpit and press, but into something of an altogether plainer speech, into the language of common life, into the happy tones of household piety, into the frank utterance of friend with friend.

In the larger, *external*, aspects of religion our Liberal work is already strong and clear. The great thought-currents of

the time are setting our way. Society is restless with perplexities and doubts which only our free faith, or some other as free, can meet and satisfy. We have a good hearing for every best word we have in us on these larger topics. The great truths and principles for which we have stood, and long stood alone, are now being adopted by the foremost thinkers in many Churches. So much is this the case, that, whereas awhile ago the doubt among our timid ones was whether we could ever succeed in making a way for our truth, their doubt to-day is whether it would not make way just as well without us! How little place that doubt has among us, however, this Convention shows. We are thankful for every testimony to broad and liberal Christianity, no matter whether given in our name or not; but we assuredly have no doubt that *our* witness is needed. Certainly the success which has attended our revived and more affirmative work during the past quarter of a century, has been exactly of the kind not to show us that our work is superfluous, but to encourage us to greater earnestness and activity in it. For, our success has been that of an ever widening and more attentive hearing. Note the quality of that hearing! On every great public religious topic that comes up, people have learned to expect about the clearest, strongest, most frank and thoughtful word from the leaders of Unitarianism. Does some great question of theology come to the front: they know that in the Unitarian pulpit they will hear it discussed in its broadest aspects, with no slavish textualism, and with fearless common-sense. Is there some great crises of national duty or honor: it is to the Unitarian minister the reporters go, for the word that will handle it without gloves, and most heartily recognize its relation to Christianity. Is the public feeling outraged by the narrow and intolerant interpretation of Providence which some men are always finding for great calamities: it is to Liberal Christianity that the community turns for the ringing common-sense which shall expose the mischievous fanaticism and put the matter in a wholesome, manly light. Are the scientists "fluttering the dovecotes" of Theology by some fresh and

brilliant raid into the mysterious regions beyond the proper realm of science, it is to some of our broad scholars that society looks for the calm, strong, thoughtful word which shall restore the equilibrium of faith. Nor is it only for these occasional utterances that our churches are listened to: men know that there, year in, year out, they will hear free and thoughtful words, on some topic of large, general interest,—on the great truths of theology, the lives of public men, the interest of new books, the discoveries of science, the history of the past, the controversies of the present, the outlook to the future. Accordingly our churches are the resort of many a restless intellect, of many a lover of mental freedom, and of many an otherwise unchurched doubter.

Well, this is a work to be thankful for, and I think we are thankful for it. And yet when all this is said, I suppose we are not satisfied. For this is preponderatingly a ministry of intellect to intellect, and the world wants something more than this, and our faith is good for something more.

The function of religion is not accomplished when it has uttered even the most wise and helpful truth on these great questions. It is not accomplished when it has explained for us "the riddle of the painful earth" or made us content to leave it unexplained; when it has dissipated the abstruse definitions of Athanasius or the gloomy decrees of Calvin; nor even when it has taught us that there is no real antagonism between science and faith, and that the hypothesis of evolution still involves the postulate of God. These, after all, are only the difficulties of the meditative few, and religion has in it to be the joy and life of all. The common people should hear it gladly; it should be not only the lamp of studious hours, but the wholesome daylight of busy life. It should dwell with us in the world's common level and go with us in its common round. It should mingle with our daily life as "a spirit of power and of love and of a sound mind." It should be an undertone of happy praise and trust rippling among our manifold occupations, and near enough to the surface to break out now and then into

articulate melody. It should be a homelike atmosphere in which the dear relationships of life should find a finer closeness and tenderness, and purity. It should be a thought in which the old man and the little child may feel a common interest; to the busy life—

> "A central peace subsisting at the heart
> Of endless agitation";

and to pain and sickness, the music of "a low contented song" in which even the harsh discord of death shall pass as a suspended harmony into the firm cadence of triumphant faith. All this, is what religion should surely be in the midst of the longing, burdened, struggling life of man.

But how is religion to be all this? It cannot be, merely by being made the topic of sermons and lectures. It cannot be by mere public ministry at all. It will need much besides this;—ministries of home, ministries of friendship, frank, unashamed speech between man and man. Here is where we are weak! Here is where I find the suggestiveness of Paul's word: "Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech." We want so to feel the blessedness and value of our Faith as to be lifted out of our miserable reserve, and learn to speak of it with more earnest freedom and simplicity.

There are several directions in which we need to learn this greater "plainness of speech" about religion.

For one thing we want it even in our Preaching. I have said that our strength at present lies chiefly in our spoken word; and yet even in this we do not manage to have that simplicity which such a faith as ours deserves. Nothing can be more simple than our faith! Faith in God, as the great Heavenly Father,—stopping at that and refusing to enter into the Trinitarian speculations about the inner mysteries of his being; loving discipleship to the Christ of the Gospels without insisting on any special creed about his nature; the doing of one's duty as the condition of acceptance; an immortality of new and onward life, the very discipline of which is ordained in infinite

love and has hope in it for all. Some think that it does not make more way just because it *is* so simple. The multitude love mystery, they say, and they point to the success of other Churches whose systems, compared to ours, are a tangle of theological confusion. I am afraid the real explanation is very different. It is, that though it is perfectly true that we have the simpler *doctrines*, it is the other churches that have the simpler *preaching*.

Compare, for instance, Liberal Christianity with Methodism in this respect. The professed doctrines of Methodism have been abstruse and complicated. It has held by the whole body of Trinitarian Theology. But then it has held most of it in the background. What it has put to the front in its actual emphasis has been a few points such as the humblest minds could seize upon:—man's consciousness of sin, God's infinite love for His sinful children, and Christ's death, not in its intricate theological connection, but as the vivid and affecting token of pardon and salvation. These constituted Methodism as it was actually preached by John Wesley and his "brown-bread preachers", and, thus set forth, it was the simplest thing imaginable, and has converted and blessed millions.

Now with Unitarianism it has been exactly the reverse. Our faith is the very simplest of any, and yet such has been the character of our preaching that there is no Church that has so managed to produce upon the mind of the people the impression of being a system of high subtle intellectualism. It seems to me that our thought of the Heavenly Father's free, unpurchased, everlasting love, is in itself infinitely more touching than anything our orthodox friends have to tell. But then when God's love is the subject, the Methodist sets it forth as an appeal, while the Unitarian usually works it out as a thesis. In our hands the most touching and beautiful element of religion is apt to become an argument. Instead of preaching the Gospel we preach *about* the Gospel. So we miss the deepest longing and need of human souls. Sometimes, I am afraid, we hardly recognize that there *is* such longing and need.

I remember well the incident which first brought me sharply to book upon this matter. I was travelling by rail, a good many years ago, and was looking over a number of tracts and sermons that had recently been published in connection with one of our missionary efforts, when a thoughtful-looking man who had noticed what I was doing, said to me in perfect good faith, "Sir, have you a tract to spare that would help a young friend of mine, who is very sad and anxious under the sense of sin?" Well, I thought that I had tracts for almost everything. I had a tract to prove that God was one and not three, and others against original sin and eternal punishment; I had a most convincing argument against offering prayer to Christ, and a common-sense view of the Bible, and some most eloquent statements of the essential harmony between religion and science, and in fact I had about every theological aspect of our faith plentifully declared,—and yet, as I turned these over, I was uncomfortably conscious that none of them would have much help for a distressed and anxious soul, and I had finally to admit with some hesitation that I had *not* one suitable with me! The lesson that I got that day put a new thought and aim into my ministry. It gave me a new sense of the real need of strained and burdened hearts! There are more of these, perhaps, than we are apt to take account of. Look round upon the congregation gathered together any Sunday in any of our city churches. What an amount of weariness and struggle and temptation is represented there. How many of these have been fighting the battle of life, the week through; finding it hard work, at times ready to let all go, often tempted to do wrong,—sometimes doing wrong,—none of them perfect, and yet in the main trying to do their work in their place and to keep some manly stand-up fight for their duty. Is it intellectual disquisitions that these need? Shall we give them the latest thing in criticism or science? Surely this faith of ours has something better in it for them! "Seeing then we have such hope, let use use *great plainness of speech.*" Cannot we say something to help the weak and weary to feel the touch of the

everlasting presence and the unchangeable love of God; something to set the feet a little firmer on the rock, to renew in the memory the half-forgotten words of the world's mightiest faith; to bring up in the mind's eye the beautiful life of Christ, or arouse the slumbering sense of immortality. I am not speaking now of how our Liberal Faith might perhaps thus be brought home to the poorer and laboring classes, who at present are almost strangers in our churches. The question of drawing these in among us, is complicated by social difficulties and a pride of independence which no mere simplifying of our preaching would much affect. But even taking the very classes who at present form the staple of our parishes, I cannot help believing that our faith might be made more of a helpful and happy reality to them than it at present is, if only we could reduce it to lower terms, bring it down from the intellect to the heart and set it forth in all its helpful and beautiful light.

The second direction in which we need more simple, outspoken religious life, is that of Home. Fifty years ago Dr. Channing took as the title of one of his sermons, "Unitarian Christianity most favorable to Piety." How does that sound, to-day, in the light of the so general disuse among Unitarians of the old observances of home-piety? I know that the disuse of these does not necessarily imply that the spirit of religion is absent or feeble. I know that there are some who have no religious observances at home, who have no family worship, who do not like the use of "grace" at meal-times, who hardly ever say a word to their children about religion,—and yet who at heart are sincerely religious. I remember an Orthodox preacher visiting me, years ago; for a week he went in and out with me among my people, and in our school, and our services and meetings. And when he parted from me he said: "I have had a curious experience this week. Among my own folks I have always had a fear that there is rather more religion *comes out* than there is *in;* but here, I have kept feeling that there is more religion in than comes out." I believe he was right;

and of the two extremes, better this than the other. But, still, we carry this reserve altogether too far. If some people put reflectors round about their piety to make it show for more, that is no reason for our hiding ours under a bushel to keep it from showing at all. "Let your light shine," was Christ's word; and home is just one of those places, where surely, if anywhere, it ought to shine out with a sweet, natural openness. The very nature of home pleads for religion to have not only a place there, but an open and acknowledged place. Home is one of the great centres around which life groups itself,—a little society complete in itself, with its own little world of joy and sorrow, and from which influences of quiet, wonderful power radiate through humanity. We look up to God as the great Father of all; our whole human society culminates in that relation, and the larger gathering of the church expresses it. Is it not fitting that the united life of the family should also culminate in the sense of His being the Father of all the families of the earth? And should it not do this openly? We all love frank and open life together in our homes; we do not like secretiveness there. Should we then have such secretiveness in our home-religion? Should we not have an *open* piety? It is this I look to, most of all:—the keeping alive in a household, between father and mother and children, and even servants and guests, the sense of a little divine fellowship in home, that they are not merely lodging together, but have a sacred home-life together—God the giver of it and the head of it—and that this innermost grouping of the world's fellowship should be sanctified by some simple occasional fellowship of adoration. And the religious instincts of the world have recognized the fitness and the need of this. The usages of open home-piety are as ancient and universal as those of the church or the temple. People speak sometimes as if home worship was something "Methodistical". There could not be a greater mistake. Wesley did indeed revive religion in the homes of his followers; but it was no new thing; it was only the revival of what had always revived in men's homes when it had revived

in their churches. It was so with Puritanism in its best days. It was so on the inner side of the Lutheran reformation. Look at the sweet home-life of early Christianity. And that early Christianity, with its simple rejoicing pieties, did but take up the best spirit of the old Hebrew household life. When Christ as he took bread, "gave thanks," he only did what he had been used to do from childhood, and, moreover, what, in some rude way,—casting a morsel in the fire or on the floor,—the idol-worshippers of Greece and Rome and all ancient lands had done from the very childhood of the world. And so the heathens with their household gods, and Abraham sacrificing at each camping ground on his rude pile of stones, are but the ancient types of that piety of the Christian home which Burns describes in his "Cotter's Saturday Night," and which prompted Baxter's noble saying, "Wherever I have a home, there God shall have an altar."

I plead, therefore, for religion in the home, and not merely for the spirit of it but for that spirit to have earnest, simple expression and culture!

I plead for *Family Prayer*. That in this busy, hurrying life of to-day, and all the more because it so busy and so hurrying, there be that daily pause that our fathers had; that quietening of the hearts of all together into the thought of God, with some old Bible-word, it may be, to set the key note of the day, and the humble bending in common prayer.

I plead for the old *Family Bible*. Said a poor woman to me, once, in one of my Manchester Mission Districts, when I called to change a tract: "Oh yes, here it is; I always keep it with the rent-book, in the Bible, then it's sure not to be disturbed." I could find Bibles in other than poor men's homes,—Bibles beautiful with brightest clasps and binding, prominent ornaments on parlor-tables, that would also be better if they were "disturbed" a little oftener, opened with the little children round that they might learn where to find the best of the old-world stories, or their favorite verses in Psalm and Gospel.

I plead for *Home Psalmody*. I do not know any memories

that cling more sweetly to one's life, than those of quiet Sunday evenings in the old home, when young and old gathered round, and each had some favorite hymn to ask for. Have those old times been quite banished by the modern fashion of the church music being confined to a quartette and the congregation praising God by proxy?

And I plead too for the old custom of *Grace before Meat*—just a word of thanksgiving for daily bread. I plead for this almost more emphatically than for Prayers or Hymns, because it is within the reach of all. Some people, in these progressive days, have got—or think they have—beyond praying, and it is not every one who *can* sing. But even the most "advanced" have hardly got beyond feeling thankful, and every one could speak a simple word of thanks. I know it is easy to raise objections. Probably there is no religious usage which has suffered more from ridicule. In some homes they never have it except when a minister is present to say it, which always looks as if it was said out of compliment to the minister rather than out of gratitude to God. Besides, why single out one's food to be particularly thankful for? Charles Lamb said he would sooner say grace for a good book than for a good dinner. Say grace in your heart for every blessing you have—there is no danger of too much thankfulness. But my point is that it is good for this general spirit of thanksgiving to come to the surface, in some open fashion, now and then. And if it is so, then there is no better occasion for it than these common daily mercies. For, just because they *are* so common, they are in more danger of being taken as matter of course; and just because they are enjoyed by all the family together, they furnish the better opportunity—say, once a day when the family are *most* together,—for a united remembrance of the good providence of life. Yes, the more you look into it, the more you will see the real worth and fitness of a reverent custom, which in one form or another is almost as old as the world, and which is so simple that it may be repeated even by a little child.

Some of you might tell me perhaps, that you are afraid of re-

ligion suffering by all this familiar handling at home. These morning or evening prayers, these little sentences of thanksgiving are so apt to become mere forms. I quite grant it, though I do not think there is more danger of home-prayers becoming formal than of church-prayers becoming so. Still they *are* forms, and we cannot be sure of their being always vivified by the living spirit. But what of that? We have forms all through life—such forms, *e. g.*, as those by which we try to keep alive among men the sense of our various relations to each other. You say "How are you" when you meet your friend, and "Good bye" when you leave him. You teach your little children to say "Good morning, father" or "mother," and to ask for things with "if you please" and "thank you." You do not teach your children to say these things only when they mean just those very words, and feel them; on the contrary, you want them to *form the habit* of saying them. The habit *helps* the spirit. Life would be intolorable, if every word and action had to be the result of a new and separate thought. Habit is the fly-wheel of life; it does not supply the place of thought and effort, but enables us, when our life is in the right track, to keep in it with rather less of effort. And the divine relation of our lives simply follows the same law as these human relations. If we want to keep alive the sense of this divine relationship we must form the habit of acknowledging and referring to it. The household's prayer or grace, is the household's greeting to the great Father. It may seldom be perfectly meant; still, it helps us to keep Him in mind, and helps to recall the family day by day to something of the sense of trying—not separately but together—to do right and to love God. I am sure there is a blessing in it. Religion openly acknowledged by all the family together, helps to keep the home-life up to its true pitch. It keeps the home-affections more delicate and pure; it softens the little household strifes and jars and worries; it breathes into parent and child the spirit of kindlier helpfulness and happier content; and when trials and sorrows come, as come they will at times, in every family, it makes it

easier alike to young and old to speak out their deepest word of mutual comfort and to reach out together to the higher comfort still. And so through all our comings and goings, and sunshine and shadow, it brings a richer, closer life, and helps all our changing days

—"to be
Linked each to each by natural piety."

There is yet a third direction in which this grand Liberal faith of ours should teach us more of this "plainness of speech." I mean in Personal Religious Intercourse and Fellowship, in frank converse between friend and friend, and in being ready to speak an open, unashamed word for our religious convictions. I cannot help thinking that we have carried individualism in religion to an extreme. We have lost sight of the help to religious life which there is in frank interchange of thought and experience. We say that religion is a thing simply between each man and his maker; so it is, in its inmost essence; but, for its culture, it is something which should be also between man and man. That was a wise word the old man gave to John Wesley when he was wearing his heart out in the lonely struggles of his first deep convictions: "Sir, the Bible knows nothing of solitary religion." It was out of that word came all that net work of close brotherly fellowship by which early Methodism strengthened its new converts, and helped to keep them on their feet. Perhaps some of our Evangelical friends have carried this too far. We do not want any spiritual inquisition. We do not want to have people coming round and asking us or our children whether we have found Jesus,—to which perhaps the best answer is that which the little child gave to the revivalist: "Why, I didn't know that he was lost!"

I know that it is partly dread of this kind of thing, a shrinking from anything approaching to religious ostentation or cant, that has led us as a body into the opposite fault of undue reserve. Partly, too, it arises from the very independence of mind which Unitarianism fosters, without which, indeed, a man could hardly be a Unitarian, and which makes men more able

to stand alone, and less disposed to lean up against each other for religious sympathy. I know, too, the natural shrinking of busy men of the world from any distinct avowal of religious faith. And yet, in the extent to which this reticence is carried among us, is it not almost a lack of religious manliness? Our very individualism should teach us better! Look at this: Unitarianism is *in theory* about the most individual, the least sacerdotal, of all religions; it does not admit that ministers are anything more than laymen. But *in practice* Unitarians are about the most dependent of any, on their ministers, the most utterly helpless for any religious action or service unless the minister is at hand! So, it is too much a one-man-ministry in our churches, and no ministry at all out of them. This is not from lack of convictions. There is not one of our churches but has among its members men of the very finest thought and feeling and sincerity. But this morbid reserve seals their lips. "We have no religion—to speak of," they say. A good reply, as it was first given; but as a word to take as a sort of motto, and even rather to pride oneself upon, a false and mischievous word! "No religion to speak of"—when society is faint and sick for the very word which has been given to us that we might speak it! "No religion to speak of," when the young are growing up about us in our homes and churches all adrift and perplexed for lack of it!

Why, only see how all this is dwarfing and hindering our work to-day. See how it prevents our churches from being the religious help and power they might be to the multitudes who are drifting away from the old orthodox moorings. They are longing for some religious home, and they ought to find it with us. Perhaps they try. They are attracted by our common-sense doctrines, and by our frank, manly freedom. They come in among us, often with a glad, earnest enthusiasm. But what do they find? Where is the fellowship they looked for in these religious thoughts which are so interesting to them? Where are the meetings, such as they have been used to, for mutual help in religious life! They have looked for a religious home,

and they find themselves in an upland theological pasture, the chilliness of which is poorly compensated for by the fact that all its gates are left absolutely open! The more we eschew all gates and fences, the more do we need a warm centre of brotherly fellowship at the heart of our intellectual freedom.

But I think this constitutional reticence is most injurious to the younger folks about us. It makes our churches powerless to help these, just when they most need help, at the very turning-point of life. To all young people there come times of religious awakening. The heart arouses itself out of the heedless life of youth; it is stirred by the longing for nobler things; it is perplexed by new doubts; perhaps it is sad in the sense of sin; it craves sympathy, and yet is ashamed and afraid to seek it. Now our orthodox friends watch for these seasons of soul-awakening and provide for them; the first sign is noticed; older friends speak with kind openness, and often the young heart is helped through its struggles and difficulties, and led to convictions and resolutions which permanently change the life. But see how it is among us. Our young people grow up in this atmosphere of reserve. They do not hear religion talked about at home, at least not in any earnest experimental way. They grow up, feeling as if it was something not to be spoken of. Piety is left to take care of itself. No one watches for the "tides of the spirit." The consequence is that when the new, strange movements of feeling come to them, there is no one to whom they can open their hearts. They have never talked with father or mother even, and shrink from doing so. I cannot help thinking that this is the reason why we often lose our young people just when their real christian life should be beginning. For, the opportunity we neglect is readily enough seized by others. Orthodoxy affectionately urges that Unitarianism is dangerous and wrong. Scepticism suggests doubts whether all religion is not nonsense. Is it wonderful that, between these two, the Liberalism, which, with the noblest word to speak, holds back from any speech at all, fails to holds its own? The wonder would be if it were otherwise!

All this wants altering! These great thoughts and truths of ours are not given to be merely the light of solitary thought, but for the happy converse of friendship and the frank intercourse of home. I like that word which our "Free Religious" friends have taken for their motto: "Freedom *and Fellowship* in Religion." Only, let us have this in its fulness. Not "Fellowship" only among those who hold different faiths or no faith. Suppose we have a little more fellowship with each other, a little more trust to speak out our best beliefs. Is there no lesson for us in that old word that has come down from Moses' time, about those great thoughts that he gave his people? "These things which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." It was but the law and faith of Israel that Moses and his people had to talk of; shall we not be at least as glad and earnest in speaking of these brighter, larger truths which Christ has given us,—truths which we humbly think we see in clearer light than most?

Oh friends! brethren of our many churches, near and far, I feel that here are the lessons that we most need to-day! I make no apology for not taking up any of the larger and more striking topics of the time. There is no fear of our neglecting these. Keen eyes are looking all along the horizon of the future. Many a strong word will interpret for you its signs. Bear with me that out of the quiet past I have brought you some of those old thoughts which in the rush of progress are always in danger of being forgotten. Bear with me that in these opening hours of this Conference about our work, I have urged upon you some of the deep, innermost conditions of doing any effective work at all. And for our work's sake I urge them; that work is so needed! Still, among all the restless movements of the world the one thing needful to lift humanity out of all its doubt and woe and sin is the simple religion of Jesus Christ. A great, plain, loving Word it wants to be; a word not

for pastors only but for all; "It takes the whole church to preach the whole Gospel." The world is ready for us, but are we ready for the world? It is not great success I look for. I do not know that that is ever likely to be ours. I do not shrink from insignificance if it be the insignficance of those mean things by which God silently builds up the future. I am not afraid of the reproach of few coming to us; but I do always tremble lest those who do come, attracted by our light of freedom, should find no glow of love and prayer, and sink into less care about religious things than when they came! May we be saved from such a shame as that! Nay; with such a Word as ours to speak shall we "put a vail" either upon our hearts or over our lips? Rather let that nobler part be ours, that "open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord." Yes, such "open face" of faith in God and love to man that we may be changed by what we look at, and all our coldness and feebleness and timidity may fall from us, till we go "even as by the spirit of the Lord," if not "from glory unto glory," at least from strength to strength!

"Let him who gropes painfully in darkness or uncertain light, and prays vehemently that the dawn may ripen into day, lay this precept well to heart: "Do the duty which lies nearest to thee," which thou knowest to be a duty; thy second duty will have already become clearer."—THOMAS CARLYLE.

He is not a Jew who is one outwardly, but inwardly: and circumcision is that of the heart,—spiritual, not literal.—*Paul.*

He alone is a true Hindu whose heart is just; and he alone a true Musselman whose life is true.—*Sufi* (*Mohammedan*).

A man does not become a Brahmann by his platted hair, or by his family; in whom there is truth and righteousness, he is the True Man.—*Dhamnapada* (*Buddhist*).

The time will come when from the most remote portions of the earth, from the Vedas and the Sagas, from the learned Alexandrians and the ignorant Galla Negroes, there will be gathered hymns and prayers and maxims, in which every religious soul may unite,—the magnificent liturgy of the human race.—*Higginson.*

DEVOTIONAL READINGS.

I.

RELIGIOUS UNITY.

Then Peter said: "Ye know that it is an unlawful thing for a Jew to keep company with one of another nation, or to come near him. But God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean. Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to Him."—*Acts.*

Abraham once welcomed an aged stranger to his table. When all had gathered round the board, each uttered "Bismillah" ("In the name of God") save one:—the stranger guest uttered no word. Then Abraham said: "Old man, is it not right when thou dost eat thy food to repeat the name of God?" The stranger replied: "My custom is that of the fire-worshipper." Then Abraham arose in wrath and drove the aged Geber from his house. Even as he did so, a spirit stood before the patriarch and said: "Abraham, for a hundred years the divine bounty has flowed out in sunshine and rain, in bread and life to this man: is it for thee to refuse him because his worship is not thine?"—*Saadi* (*Persian*).

There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; there are diversities of services, but the same Lord; and there are diversities of operations, but the same God who worketh all in all.—*Paul.*

God dwells in all things in His fulness. Altar-flowers are of many species, but all worship is one; systems of faith are different, but God is one.—*Vemana* (*Hindu*).

All nations have their message from on high,
Each the Messiah of some central thought,
For the fulfilment and delight of man:
One has to teach that Labor is divine;
Another Freedom; and another Mind;
And all that God is open-eyed and just,
The happy center and calm heart of all.—*Lowell.*

Wherever through the ages rise
The altars of self-sacrifice,
Where love its arms has opened wide,
Or man for man has calmly died,
I see the same white wings outspread
That hovered o'er the Master's head.

And everywhere the Spirit walks
The garden of the heart, and talks
With man, as under Eden's trees,
In all his varied languages.—*Whittier.*

Let us all unite to uprear the true church. No nation, no sect, ought to be excluded; for through each, God has spoken, and in each some form of truth is deposited in the flow of ages. Come ye nations of the West, with all the riches of truth ye possess. Let also the nations of the East come, clad in the golden robe of morning light, with their sublime devotion and fervent faith. Thus shall the scriptures of science in the West and of inspiration in the East constitute together the word of God.—*Keshub Chunder Sen.*

THE UNIVERSAL PRAYER.

Father of all! in every age,
In every clime adored,
By saint, by savage or by sage,—
Jehovah, Jove or Lord!

This day be bread and peace my lot:
All else beneath the sun,
Thou knowest if best bestowed or not,
And let thy will be done.

To thee whose temple is all space,
Whose altar earth, sea, skies,
One chorus let all beings raise,
All nature's incense rise.—*Pope.*

HYMN.

One holy church of God appears
Through every age and race,
Unwasted by the lapse of years,
Unchanged by changing place.

From oldest time, on farthest shores,
Beneath the pine or palm,
One Unseen Presence she adores,
With silence or with psalm.

Her priests are all God's faithful sons,
To serve the world raised up;
The pure in heart her baptised ones,
Love, her communion cup.

The truth is her prophetic gift,
The soul her sacred page;
And feet on mercy's errands swift
Still make her pilgrimage.—*S. Longfellow.*

Sunday School Lessons.

CORNER-STONES OF CHARACTER.

BY MRS. K. G. WELLS.

III. UNAFFECTEDNESS.

"Fine manners are the mantle of fine minds."

Truthfulness and honesty lead to Unaffectedness, which is one of the *polished* corner-stones of character. All boys and girls want to have fine manners, yet all know what it means to "put on airs." It takes a great deal to make a gentleman or a lady. Unaffectedness helps much in such a making.

With girls, **affectations** come sooner than with boys; e.g., tied-back dresses, fan-flirting, simpering voice and smile, lazy manner. What is silly, vain and senseless in a girl becomes contemptible in a woman. Boys swagger, put on "bossing airs," know all about politics and business, and patronize their elders. They are fault-finding and irritating, and grow up into conceited, ignorant, weak men.

It won't do to be merely natural, because that often means having a rough, ungraceful exterior, though a kindly heart. Only polished saints can afford to always act as they feel. Think a great deal about your manners, by trying to imitate the grace of others, and by longing to make every one a little bit happier; think enough to see your faults, but not your good points.

First impressions are made by manners, and if girls and boys want to be popular, they must not be affected; other girls and boys won't "stand" that. First, try to be *good*, (that means everything); next, to be *intelligent;* thirdly, to have charming, noble *manners*. There are two general types of manners, the consoling and the exalting; for all persons are unconsciously consolers or exalters to others. Perfect manners would unite both types.

Never forget that unless **fine manners are founded on simple, sincere purposes,** their polish will soon vanish. Affected girls *can't* be pretty or dignified, nor affected boys look gentlemanly. A truthful, honest character will show itself in a pleasing face and lovely manners; and constant fine manners, in turn, help one to be good. *Pretence* of all kinds is wrong, and never deceives long; affectation is a form of hypocrisy. Do not pretend to know when you don't, nor act as if you had always known something, when you have just read it; or as if your influence in a certain matter had been quite important, when it was not. Never try to show off, or to be greater than you really are.

Towards God, unaffectedness is shown by not thinking of something else when saying your prayers, or by fancying that you can mislead Him about your motives by apparently good deeds.

Towards one's self, — by making your manners the reflection of a noble, simple character, not relying on the first alone for credentials.

Towards others, — by never pretending to be what you are not, and by never putting on grace merely to *please* without wishing to *help*. Feel the beauty of the world, its joy, its loveliness, and your feelings will express themselves in manners that will be agents of peace, of mirth, and of comfort.

CORNER-STONES OF CHARACTER.

BY MRS. K. G. WELLS.

IV. TEMPERANCE.

"Excess is sin."

Temperance in regard to pleasure and appetites is part of that self-control which will be the subject of the next lesson.

What is the **proper end of eating and drinking?** *Nourishment. Pleasure* comes in also as an element, gratis, and in this element lies the danger of intemperance. Is it right to like candy and cake, and to enjoy our meals? Yes; if sense of pleasure does not make us either selfish, sick, or gluttonous. Like candy, but be able to go without it.

Is it right to drink **wine, tea, and coffee, or to smoke?** For children, *No.* (The teacher will here handle the question of total abstinence, and will find the chief argument in its favor in the chivalric feeling of abstaining "for others' sakes," the principle of "*noblesse oblige.*" Appeal to a child's generous nature.) Show also that the future health of the young depends upon the early observance of temperance in all things; and that intemperance wastes health, money, time and power.

Temperance is an **easy virtue to acquire,** because, 1. Self-denial has its own charms. 2. It is easier to imitate an example which demands an exercise of the will than of the intellect. 3. It does not remove the power to have a good time.

A *child's* temperance would naturally consist in refraining from **elaborate lunches** at cake-shops, from spruce beer and the like, and from sweet-fern cigars. Such smoking and eating are unhealthy practices, and foster envy among those who are not able to follow them, besides leading the weak and covetous to deceit to obtain the desired object. Many a first step in wrong doing can be traced back to such school-luncheons and other early forms of self-indulgence. Temperance at a **child's party** means not to eat all the ice-cream one can get, nor to put candy in both papers and pockets, nor to want to beat in *all* the games one plays.

So intemperance applies to **much more than eating and drinking;** it means, also, demanding *too much* of any one thing, or seeking *constantly for novelty;* e.g., going too often to the theatre; buying all the fashionable colors in cravats and ribbons; wanting new toys, instead of mending old ones and making believe that the same plaything can serve many purposes; calling for new books, especially for trashy novels, instead of reading over the old, good ones; being unhappy because a party is missed. Some girls want to go to every party, yet pretend to go to school at the same time. Temperance always leaves *on hand* material for a good time later; boys and girls act as if pleasure could only be had *now.*

Temperance is a **duty to God,** because by keeping our mental and bodily powers healthy we can help Him more: **to ourselves,** as thereby we increase our own abilities and enjoyments: **to others,** because our example and encouragement are due to all who fail and who strive.

Notes and News.

Our Devotional Pages.—Two pages of the present number of UNITY are given to "Devotional Readings." We intend this to be a regular feature of our publication hereafter. In these Readings we design generally to include a prayer, two hymns, and selections of the most devout and inspiring passages from our own Bible and other Sacred Scriptures of the world. We believe nothing is more important than the cultivation in us all of the spirit of aspiration and worship; and we hope these pages of devotional thought may prove acceptable to many individual readers in aiding them to promote such culture in private, and also useful as "Services" to be used by little bands of Liberals who meet together to read and talk about the Essays and Sermons which we print. Bringing side by side the best utterances of the great religious prophets of all lands, we shall be enabled to see how much broader is the great Providence of God, and how much larger and better a thing is religion, than most of us have been taught to believe. The prayers which we shall print will be mainly selections, from THEODORE PARKER, GEORGE DAWSON, COLLYER, CHANNING, Father TAYLOR, FENELON, and devout souls of all ages with little reference to religious name. The lyric poetry of our Liberal Faith is coming to be both extensive and rich. From this we shall endeavor to select the best—new and old. Care will be taken to have the hymns of such meters that they may be sung to common tunes. This department is for the present under the charge of Rev. H. M. SIMMONS, of Kenosha, Wis.

A movement is on foot looking toward securing a Unitarian Head-Quarters in Chicago—that is, a place, centrally located in the city, where Liberal books, and publications of various kind may be kept for sale, and where pastors, and others from all over the West may go when they are in the city, to write letters, and get information, and see the Chicago pastors, or other representatives of our city Liberal Work,—More about this anon!

The Iowa Farmer, published at Des Moines, the State Capital, has just begun a new volume with Rev. H. A. REID, Secretary of the Iowa Liberal League, at its head. It has a Scientific Department, conducted by a "Christian Evolutionist," who says some brave things, which will help the Liberal cause in the State. We wish the financial platform of the paper was as sound as its agricultural and theological.

A private letter from Denver, Colorada, informs us that the Unitarians there are feeling new life stirring within them, and are on the lookout for a pastor. With a good man they can go forward with considerable strength. The question now is—Where is the man? The field is an interesting and important one.

One of Rev. Mr. JASPER'S converts is frank enough to reply: "I doan know whedder I'ze got religun or not—try me wid a chickun!" This strikes us as one of the best tests of religion we have seen. We respectfully recommend its general adoption, instead of subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles or the Westminster Confession.

"The New York *Times* thus reports an interview with a learned Chinaman: 'Do you believe in religion, Wall Ho?' 'Yes,' he said, 'we are all alike. We all have the same God. We all pray to him the same,—the Chinaman, Turk, Englishman and American. He is the same God all over the world, only each nation spells his name differently. We call him Joss; the Hindus call him Bramola; the Greeks call him Theos; the Italian, Deus; the American Indian, Great Spirit; the Frenchman, Dieu; the German, Gott; the American, God; and so on. The same God in twenty-six different nations has the same attributes—omniscience, omnipresence, potentiality. Every nation prays to him the same. You and I, though you call me a heathen, worship the same God. We believe precisely alike, except when we come to the prophets; and then all nations disagree.'"—*Index.*

A very interesting discussion has been going on for some time in the *Monticello* (Iowa) *Express*, between Rev. S. W. SAMPLE of Strawberry Point (Unitarian) and Rev. JOHN RICE of Jones County (Old School Presbyterian) upon the subject of Bible Infallibility. As we understand it, Mr. RICE had heard, or seen, something from Mr. SAMPLE to the effect that the latter regarded the Bible as containing evidences of fallibility, whereupon he challenged him to prove his position. The debate has been conducted with gentlemanliness and candor, and certainly, with no little ability on both sides. Mr. RICE has shown himself not only a keen dialectician, but well read in that vast literature which has sprung up, whose object is, by hook or by crook, to reconcile Bible discrepancies, and explain away difficulties, and invent "allegorical," "figurative," "symbolic," "hidden," "spiritual," and "double," meanings, wherever such are needed to help the reader through tight places. But Mr. SAMPLE has shown himself quite prepared for all this, and the light that he pours through this intellectual jugglery is refreshing. Perhaps the most interesting feature of the discussion is the emphasis which Mr. SAMPLE gives constantly to the affirmations of the Liberal position. The charge made by his opponent, and which we all hear urged so much on every side,

that those who deny the infallibility of the Bible are mere negativists and destroyers, tearing away the foundation of religion, and putting no other in its place, Mr. SAMPLE meets and answers most powerfully and effectually. The debate will open the eyes of a great many persons, and cannot fail to do good.

One of the principal subjects of discussions in the State Universalist Convention recently held in Peoria, was the question: "Do Universalists sufficiently appreciate, and endeavor to maintain, the standing of their Church among the Christian denominations?" This is all very well; but we trust the time will never come when our excellent Universalist friends will think more of getting a "standing" and recognition among the orthodox sects than of preaching bravely the grand principles of Liberal Christianity for which thay have so long battled. We hope we are mistaken in thinking that we have discovered of late, on the part of some prominent members of the denomination, a spirit of timidity and drawing-back, so different from the heroic old-time Universalist spirit. Perhaps we are wrong, but we don't think that being invited into an Orthodox pulpit or counted in at a gathering of Evangelical churches ought to be regarded as a consummation so beatific as to justify any Universalist or Unitarian minister in praying the old prayer: "Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

The Michigan Association of Spiritualists and Liberals, held its semi-annual session in the hall of the Free Congregation, Grand Rapids, August 31st and September 1st. The meeting was well attended. Amoung the speakers present were REV. GEO. W. COOKE, of Grand Haven; and REV. J. N. PARDEE, of Charlotte. The Spiritualists of Michigan are pushing vigorously in the direction of permanent organization and the settlement of lecturers over societies or over definite circuits. They are also trying to draw the Liberals of the State into closer relations with them, for the purpose of more efficient work. The annual address sets forth the claims of both parties, and urges the importance of the Liberal League movement. Mr. S. B. MCCRACKEN, of Detroit, Secretary of the Association, is an efficient worker in the interests of free thought. We are pleased to see this Association striving to rid itself of unworthy members and doctrines, and to unite on a more permanent basis for real work. Its declared desire to meet the wants of the religious spirit in man, and to furnish strength to his moral nature, meets with our sincerest sympathy.

The National Convention of Free Thinkers, held at Watkins, N. Y., beginning Aug. 22, was a noteworthy gathering, not so much for numbers as for quality. On the platform, sitting in perfect harmony side by side, could be seen Atheists and Theists, Materialists and

Spiritualists, Infidels and Christians, Orthordox and Radicals; and the speeches from the representatives of these different schools, all indicated as a common ground of agreement, entire mental liberty. On this platform even two Presbyterian ministers agreed to stand. Of course all sorts of "Reformers" were present, and all kind of theories were advocated; but all in the best temper imaginable; and one good result from the convention was, that we all had greater charity for each other's opinions. I doubt if, before, so motley a gathering had ever occurred without violent dispute; and yet every one was enthusiastic in advocating his or her peculiar ideas.

There was the freest expression of opinion, and the most unbounded enthusiasm for the most uninspiring subjects. Several members of the Society of Humanity from New York City, were present, and appeared firmly convinced that Positivism was the coming Religion; the Spiritualists, represented by PEEBLES, and STEBBINS, were equally positive that Spiritualism was the one thing needful; Elders EVANS and LOOMIS explained the Shaker tenets, and SEAVER, BELL, and others enlarged upon Materialism. The Presbyterian ministers present asserted that in Evangelical Christianity there was enough of mental liberty to satisfy any person; though one of them it seemed to me had but little of Calvinism left, and I should not be surprised to see him at our next Western Conference, asking for fellowship.

Watkins is one of the most Orthordox towns in the State of New York, yet the people were very courteous, and while regarding the assembly much like a collection of wild animals, were yet all anxious to visit the menagerie, notwithstanding the warnings given from the pulpits the Sunday before.—W. E. C.

The Wisconsin Conference.—The summer meeting of the Wisconsin Conference of Unitarian and Independent Societies, held at Milwaukee, August 22—25, was well attended, and was an interesting meeting. The programme was carried out nearly in full, except that the Rev. Mr. MERCER, of Chicago, Swedenborgian, was not able to be present, and that on Sunday evening, Rev. J. L. DUDLEY, filled the place left vacent by the absence of Mr. CLUTE. The papers were all good, the sermons were inspiring, and the interest was hearty. The sermon by Mr. FORBUSH at the opening was highly praised by all who heard it. The reports on Friday morning of the churches was encouraging; and though the outward showing was not large, the deeper result seemed apparent. Then came a clear, sharp, effective essay from Prof. ALLEN. In the evening, Mr. APPLEBEE set forth in striking and emphatic manner, the duties of religious liberalism. Saturday was spent on the delightful grounds of the Soldier's Home, five miles from the city. The morning was given to a most spirited debate on the proposition of the executive committee of the A. U. A. to

provide for a committee of fellowship, before which candidates for the Unitarian Ministry must come for approval. Almost without exception, all the speakers were apposed to the proposed measure, and an unanimous resolution was carried, asking the National Conference not to adopt such proposed restriction of fellowship. All deeply sympathized with the desire to weed out immorality, but all feared the effects of any effort at intellectual restriction. In the afternoon, Mr. SIMMONS and Mrs. OLYMPIA BROWN, appeared in their places on the programme. Sunday morning Dr. KERR spoke at the church to a full house. In the evening DR. DUDLEY drew a congregation which filled every part of the church to its utmost. His sermon was a clear and emphatic statement of the Free Religious platform, and had to it no uncertain tone. Altogether the Conference was successful, and the reputation of our Wisconsin friends for broad liberality, generous fellowship, and earnestness of purpose, was well sustained.—G. W. C.

Foreign Notes.—The *Theological Review* (Unitarian) declares that all the intellectual and religious activity of the Church of England seems to be among the High Churchmen; the Evangelical party producing few men of learning and capacity.

The Burials Question is approaching an equitable solution. In spite of ecclesiastical opposition, the cause of justice and decency gains daily in Parliament. A recent resolution that interments in parish church yards be permitted, either without any burial service or with the services preferred by the relations or friends of the deceased, and by the persons chosen by them, has been defeated indeed, but by the slender majority of fifteen in a house of four hundred and sixty-nine. It will pass next time.

The Reformed Church of France is much benefitted by the establishment of the Republic. The present single society in Paris is to be divided into several, a step which will increase the repute and influence of the liberal element in the French Protestant body. Prominent men like E. RENAN, and M. TASINE, the historian, have their children christened in the Protestant Church. It is worthy of note, also, that in the land of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew five of the nine present Ministers of State are Protestants.

The Roman Catholic papers contain the prospectus of a new Catholic bank, called the *Societe de l'Union Generale*, with a capital of twenty-five million francs, in shares. This is a gigantic undertaking of the Ultramontane party, under the leadership of the Jesuits. Italian and French Catholics are united in this scheme. The great Roman names of BORGHESE, CHIGI, G. BANDINI, Duke SALVIATI, Marquis PATRIZI and the papal general KANZLER, are side by side in the directory with the late French postal secretary LÉON RIANT, EÈUGNE VEUILLOT, editor of the Catholic organ *Univers*, and the well known Marquis of PLOEUC, until recently vice-governor of the Bank of France

and now president of the new association, whose headquarters are in Paris! These names show the character of the undertaking, and the prospectus says truly "The composition of the council of administration indicates plainly the spirit in which this new institution is to be developed."

Under the dictatorship of the bigoted and pietistic Dr. UHLHORN, the Lutheran church in the late Kingdom of Hanover grows more and more reactionary. Recently when their former monarch, the blind, incompetent and feudalistic ex-King George died, the churches were draped in black, and memorial services were held amid great lamentation and fulsome eulogies by the clergy. The usual prayer for the German emperor was received with significant coughing. In the city of Hannover the clergy were met to send a letter of condolence to the widowed Queen MARIE, when one of the ministers present laid before them a letter of sympathy with Emperor WILLIAM at the second attack on his life Great confusion and disagreement were the result, and the letter was finally forwarded to Berlin with only four signatures. It is necessary to add that in this anti-Prussian feeling the clergy by no means represent the people.

In Prussia a certificate is required of candidates of theolgy, which shall testify to the faithfulness of their attendance on the Holy Communion, and the Prussian Minister of Finance has just decided that, in consideration of their sacred office, such certificates of candidates are to be exempt from the usual stamp tax!

On Corpus Christi day at Kalisch, in Russian Poland, a Roman Catholic altar fell apart from some cause or other. Immediately the cry was raised that a Jew had done it. Without stopping to ascertain the truth or falsity of this report, the fanatical believers set upon their Israelite neighbors, and celebrated the high feast of their church by an indiscriminate and cruel attack on men, women and children. Thirteen persons were killed, private houses plundered, and the synagogue laid in waste. The military at last secured peace, arresting several hundred persons, among them a dozen ecclesiastics, the real offenders.—C. W. W.

Literary—REV. JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE'S admirable Music Hall Lecture, entitled "Why am I a Unitarian?" can be obtained in pamphlet form from GEO. H. ELLIS, 101 Milk St., Boston. Price 6 cents per copy.——It is rumored that a new volume of lyrical poems by MR. TENNYSON may be expected shortly to make its appearance.——HELEN HUNT, (MRS. JACKSON) is engaged upon a story of Colorada life for young people, to be entitled "Nelly's Silver-Mine."——The REV. EDWARD EVERETT HALE'S sketches of the lives of the brothers EVERETT, prepared for the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, have been republished in a slender pamphlet by LITTLE, BROWN & Co., Boston.——REV. JOHN W. CHADWICK publishes, each season, a monthly series of sermons. The

series for 1877—8 is complete, comprising eight discourses, on the following subjects: Simplicity of True Religion; The Rising Faith; Fate and Freedom; The Child Jesus; The Angel Song; Future Punishment; The Sacred Scriptures; The Morals of Belief. Price 6 cents each. Published by JAMES MILLER, 779 Broadway, N. Y. ——Speaking of MR. G. H. LEWES' "Problems of Life and Mind," the New York *Times* says: "In our public libraries, the first volume of his work is generally pretty well used,—used in due proportion to the esteem in which the author's name is held,—while the second has always remained standing on the shelves in spotless virginity."—— The revised New Testament is nearly all printed. It will be presented to the Convocation of Canterbury next year.——H. W. LONGFELLOW's *Poems of Places*, have now reached the twenty-third volume. Volume 21 is devoted to Lyrics including the Holy Land; Volume 22 to Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, Arabia, Turkestan, and Afganistan; Volume 23 to Persia, India and China. The three form a choice library of Sacred and Oriental poetry.——The organ of the English Ritualists says: "Our quarrel with the Roman Catholic is chiefly on matters of detail, but our quarrel with Protestanism is about first principles."——A Boston house is about to publish "The Life and Education of LAURA DEWEY BRIDGMAN," the deaf, blind, and dumb girl. The book is to be written by MRS. MARY SWIFT LAMSON, LAURA's first teacher. LAURA BRIDGMAN's life is interesting, but it has been pretty well "written up" by DR. HOWE and MR. MAYHEW.——In an editorial on "Art-Education," called out by a sermon of Rev. C. W. WENDTE the *Chicago Tribune* says: "Cincinnati is to-day the real art-center of the United States, notwithstanding the claims Boston makes to that position."

Personals—MRS. LIVERMORE is still talking about the coming man, and yet MR. LIVERMORE is not jealous.——The Blue Island, Ills. Universalists have secured the services of the REV. MISS FLORENCE KALLOCK, late of Waverly, Ia.——Prof. CHURCH, of the Nebraska State University, so well known among the Liberals of his State, has returned to his home and work after a year's absence in Europe.——Miss WALCOTT, the very efficient Matron of the Industrial School connected with ROBERT COLLYER's church in this city, and a highly esteemed and useful woman, died last week. MR. COLLYER, though only away for three months, will find on his return a number of important and sad vacancies in his congregation.——Lutheran ministers sometimes serve very large parishes. The REV. JOSHUA JAEGER, of Allentown, Penn., serves five congregations. He has been in the active ministry sixty-one year's. The REV. T. T. JAEGER, of Reading, Penn., serves six congregations; the REV. H. WIEKSEL, North Cumberland County, Penn., eight congregations; the REV. T. STECK, Berwick, Penn., seven; three others in the same State, serve five congregations each; three

serve six; and two serve seven. The largest congregation reported is 1,000. Is not here a hint for Unitarian ministers, especially in the West, where so many places desire to hear our Liberal gospel, but cannot support a preacher alone?——Mr. SANKEY, now in England, having failed to induce Mr. MOODY to join him there, will begin a revival himself, with the assistance of English preachers, and intends to make a tour of the whole of England.——The Rev. Mr. MASDEN, one of the most eminent clergymen in Philadelphia, has secured the use of a beer garden in which to hold Sunday afternoon religious services.——Gov. BISHOP addressed his appeal for prayer in behalf of the yellow-fever sufferers to "the *Christians* of Ohio" only. Does his Excellency think that none of the vast number of Israelites in that State ever pray? Or does he regard their prayers as of no avail?——Rev. ROBERT COLLYER'S pulpit was supplied the first Sunday of September by Rev. J. LL. JONES, of Janesville, Wis., and on the second Sunday by Rev. Dr. THOMAS, the Broad Church Methodist of this city. Mr. COLLYER is expected back from Europe about the first of October.

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS, of New York, announce as nearly ready, two books about the Bible, written from the Liberal stand point, to-wit: "*The Bible of To-day*," by JOHN W. CHADWICK, price $1.50; and "*What is the Bible?*" by J. T. SUNDERLAND, price $1.25. The former is a series of Lectures, forming a critical and historical introduction to the Old and New Testaments. The latter is an attempt briefly, in the light of the best scholarship, and in the most reverent and catholic spirit, to answer the question which forms the title of the book. The table of contents of Mr. SUNDERLAND'S volume, is as follows:

CHAPTER I.—Origin and growth of the various great Sacred Books, or Bibles of the World. Sacred Books, natural and necessary products of the human mind. Analogies between the historical development of our own and other great Sacred Books. Religion a larger and richer thing than Jew, Christian or Pagan has understood.

CHAPTER II.—A more particular account of the origin and growth of our own Bible;—the men who wrote it; the time when they wrote it; how they came to write it; its relation to the times, and the race that produced it; its progressive character; the changes that have taken place in it in the various ages; how it came to be elevated to the rank of sacredness. The Apocryphal, and the lost books of the Old Testament; the Apocryphal books of the New Testament; the value of these, and their relation to the Bible. The formation and final settlement of the Scripture Canon.

CHAPTER III.—Theory of Infallibility of our Bible; bearing of the preceding facts upon it; additional difficulties in the way of the theory; difficulties seriously increase with the growth of science and

scholarship. "Harmonizing" the Bible with Science. Are there contradictions in the Bible? Does the Bible contain immoral teachings, or representations of God that are degrading? Views of the Bible that drive men away from religion. Something better for the Bible than the infalliblity theory.

CHAPTER IV.—What is Inspiration? What is Revelation? Both too large to be confined to any one age or any one book! Did morals and religion spring from the Bible? or, did the Bible spring from morals and religion? The criterion of truth. The Bible as a classic. The Bible and modern civilization. The Bible as a history of religious Evolution. The Bible as the parent of Monotheism. The Bible as a book of moral and spiritual teachings and incitement. Separating dross from gold. Who are the real friends, and who are the real enemies of the Bible?

APPENDIX.—A list of works that may be read or consulted with profit, by persons desiring to get a more full knowledge of the subjects treated above.

Voltaire.—Rev. GEO. CUTTER, of Buffalo, publishes in the *Index* of that city, a centenary sermon on Voltaire. It is a careful, broad and just estimate of the character and life of that remarkable man, and in its main conclusions coincides with the views expressed in Mr. CHADWICK'S PAMPHLET MISSION essay.

Says Mr. CUTTER: "I am happy to repeat the story of Voltaire's life to-dav; not because I believe him to have been a perfect man, of irreproachable habits, and admirable in his way of life; he was far from that; but because he was a patriarch of humanity, a friend of freedom, a champion of reason and private judgment, and did more than any man of the last century to bring to pass that large toleration in science, in philosophy, and in faith, which we enjoy at the present time. The church which he assailed was not a true church of Christ, and had none of the spirit of holiness, purity, gentleness, which Jesus taught and exemplified. Nay, the more deeply imbued a man was with the real spirit of Christ, the more ardently would he crave the destruction of that Infamous Thing, in belief and practice, which poisoned the streams of virtue and truth which flowed through the life of France. That church stripped Christianity of its moral prestige as a religion of superior truth, reason and love. It confounded religious ideas, obliterated moral distinctions, by excusing the parasites, mistresses and minions of royalty, and by making itself the accomplice of crimes, scandals and cruelties, which must be the abhorrence and execration of all time. Honor to the man, then, whatever his faults, who by eloquence, satire, learning and philosophy exposed this hateful pretense of religion, and made it possible for the next century, for you and me, to accept the pure teachings of Christianity, without accepting the cruel craft of Jesuits, or the superstitions of the Romish

church! Voltaire believed in God, in religion, in justice and in humanity, and, in a far greater measure than many of his opponents, both Protestant and Catholic, had that charity towards all classes and races which Christianity enjoins. Let us honor him for these services, and imitate him in this spirit.

The battle against superstition and church pretension is not yet ended. We, like him, have still to protect the rights of reason in religion, the cause of private judgment, and the claims of science and philosophy, against mysteries and miracles, the teachings of Christ against creeds and confessions. May the love of Christ guide us, that it may be done with malice to none and with charity to all."

The Bible as Opposed to Miracles.—We translate what is said on the subject by a writer in the Swiss journal, *Reform.*

"The results of scientific investigation on non-religious ground are confirmed by the Bible itself, if it is read without any prepossession. As is well known, not a single biblical book bears the exact date of its origin, as is the case now with every book that is produced. Of no single miracle in the Bible can it be proved that it is told by a personal and immediate witness of the event. There are decades and centuries between the time in which these miracles are assumed to have happened and the day of him who relates it. The apostle Paul, the first N. T. author, wrote his epistles 20–30 years after the first appearance of Jesus on the scene. It is noteworthy, however, that he seems to have known no miracles of Jesus except the resurrection, and this resurrection of the master he did not understand in the literal sense in which we afterwards find it represented in the gospels, as a bodily coming forth from the grave and an ensuing second stay on earth, with the accompanying acts of speaking, eating, drinking and sleeping, but as a single ascension from the underworld into which he had at death descended, up into the world of light, the heaven where God dwelt. Out of this upper sphere Christ manifests himself to Paul, and this appearance may be psychologically explained without having recourse to a miracle. The story of the *bodily* ascension of Jesus, as we find it in the Gospels, was a natural development of the idea of a reappearance of Jesus in person to Paul after his body had been laid away in the grave. A glance at the Gospels shows that even in the years 70–130, during which period they were composed, this method of legend-creating was in full process. For two of the Evangelists, Matthew and John, are entirely silent about a bodily ascension, which as a principal miracle of the faith ought to have been told most in detail, if the writer had believed in it. Two other evangelists, Mark and Luke, dispose of the matter in a mysteriously brief manner that wakens more doubts than it answers. It is only in the Book of Acts, written still later, that we find this at first unknown and than questioned miracle told with an assured circum-

stantiality. As to miracles which are supposed to be testified to indubitably by the Bible—he only can speak of them who believes them to begin with."—C. W. W.

Japanese Miracle Workers.—Says a recent number of the *San Francisco Post*:—"Among the arrivals yesterday on the steamship City of Pekin were two priests from the interior of Japan, claiming to be endowed with miraculous power. They are on their way to the Paris Exposition with a party of their countrymen, conducted by two English gentlemen who have for several years resided in Japan. A reporter interviewed these gentlemen last evening. They told him that the priests are religious enthusiasts, who profess, through the power of faith and by the medium of prayer, to be enabled to do the most remarkable things—such as are recorded in the Christian gospels as in the power of the followers of Jesus—referring to those passages which speak of their being able to remove mountains, and to swallow deadly poisons without harm. One of the miraculous things which these priests are able to do is to walk with naked feet over the edges of swords ground to the keenness of a razor, and also over a bed of live coals. They never attempt this without a formal and fervent appeal to their divinity for protection, and they assert most positively that it would be impossible for them to perform the works they do without divine interference in their behalf. They intend to exhibit these remarkable powers in Paris during their stay, and will challenge the devotees of the Christian or any other faith to do the things that they do."

Dr. Bellows on Miracles.—Said Dr. BELLOWS, in a recent sermon: "Do you say, a revelation bears its own credentials of miracle? But were not some of the greatest miracles wrought by lying spirits and necromancers in Egypt—if the record is to be received,—and by what test are the miracles of devils to be discriminated from the miracles of angels, except it be a moral test? We can't believe miracles that support falsehoods and frauds and injustice to be from God. Why not? Because our reason and moral nature are revelations from God of a clearer and more indisputable kind, older and less to be questioned than any other form of revelation."

What is a Unitarian?—Hon. GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS in his opening address as Chairman of the Annual Festival in Boston, said: "You ask me, What is a Unitarian? I ask you, What is freedom? When I was a younger man than I am now, talking with a good orthodox friend, he said to me: 'My friend, the one thing that you need is a good dogma.' I remember that when Sir WALTER SCOTT came to die, as he lay upon his bed, speaking to his son-in-law, LOCKHART, he said to him, 'Be a good man, my dear, if when you come to lie in this place you would feel your soul at rest. Be a good man.'

I have always thought that between the two, Sir WALTER was wiser than my friend. I have found the good life to be sounder and better than the good dogma; and, if I had supposed that coming here to-day I should find that good dogma, you may be very sure that I should not be here now. So absolute is the spirit of liberty, which is the vital and essential point of what we call Unitarianism, that it has always been found impossible to reduce it to a formula. The endeavor has often been made to bring it, as you know, within the limits of a creed. You might as well try to bind the sunshine. You cannot confine a spirit which is as broad and general as the encasing air. Now surely, ladies and gentlemen, it is not for me in this learned presence, it is not for me, in the presence of these doctors, to define to you what is meant by Unitarianism; and yet, as a layman, I may still say: that Unitarianism seems to me, at least, to be the intellectual movement that shows constantly more and more *the identity of morality and religion;* which shows, with the good St. James, that 'pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.' It values character always more than creed, and it declares—I think I may venture to say it, since I am told that our excellent friend, Rev. Mr. COOK, is in Cincinnati,—it declares that there is no saving grace in any ecstatic emotion whatever, except so far as it produces *righteous living.*"

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